

Message Text

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14

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 NIC-01 RSR-01 /123 W

----- 124348

R 181606 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6028

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

USEC BRUSSELS 637

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 3445

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJECT: NEAR- GENERAL STRIKE IN PAMPLONA

BEGIN SUMMARY: JUNE 14-16 NEAR- GENERAL STRIKE AT PAMPLONA
RESUMED TODAY IN MANY MAJOR PAMPLONA FACTORIES, ALTHOUGH
SOMEWHAT DIMINISHED IN SCOPE. STRIKE IS IN SOLIDARITY WITH
250 WORKERS AT MOTOR IBERICA FACTORY, WHO, HAVING WON A PAY
DISPUTE IN LABOR COURT, FOUND THAT COMPANY NOT ONLY
DISREGARDED COURT'S DECISION BUT BEGAN TO DISMISS WORKERS.
STRIKE IS PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT SOLIDARITY STRIKE IN
RECENT YEARS. IT ALSO SIGNIFICANT FOR RELATIVELY SPONTANEOUS
MANNER IN WHICH IT SPREAD AND FOR FACT THAT MOST CLANDESTINE
LABOR GROUPS INVOLVED ARE OF CATHOLIC, RATHER THAN COMMUNIST,
NATURE. STRIKE HAS PROVIDED FIRST TEST FOR NEW GOVERNMENT
IN LABOR FIELD, AND GOVERNMENT HAS REACTED PROMPTLY WITH
EFFICIENT DISPLAY OF FORCE TO PREVENT RESULTING STREET
DISORDERS, ALTHOUGH BASIC CAUSES OF STRIKE, INCLUDING
FRUSTRATION OF BOTH WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS IN NAVARRRE
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REGION, STILL REMAIN. MEANTIME CHURCH HIERARCHY IN
PAMPLONA IS PLAYING ACTIVE ROLE. END SUMMARY.

1. ON JUNE 14-16 PAMPLONA WAS THE SCENE OF A NEAR-
GENERAL STRIKE. ACCORDING TO PRESS AND OFFICIAL SOURCES,
FROM 15,000 TO 20,000 WORKERS WENT ON STRIKE. NON- OFFICIAL
SOURCES PUT NUMBER EVEN HIGHER. THSU, MAJORITY OF
INDUSTRIAL WORK FORCE IN THIS CITY OF 150,000 INHABITANTS
PARTICIPATED. MANY COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS ALSO SHUT
DOWN THEIR DOORS DURING STRIKE AND LARGE NUMBERS OF
STUDENTS ALSO JOINED IN.

2. FOLLOWING WEEK- END MOST COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND
SMALL ENTERPRISES HAVE REOPENED. HOWEVER, WORKERS IN MOST
LARGE FACTORIES IN PAMPLONA' S INDUSTRIAL BELT ARE REPORTED
TO HAVE RESUMED STRIKE TODAY.

3. CATALYST FOR STRIKE WAS A LABOR DISPUTE DURING PAST
TWO MONTHS AT SMALL PAMPLONA BRANCH (250 WORKERS) OF MOTOR
IBERICA, ONE OF SPAIN' S LEADING MANUFACTURERS OF TRUCKS
AND TRACTORS WHICH HAS ITS MAIN FACTORY IN BARCELONA (MOTOR
IBERICA IS 61 PERCENT OWNED BY SPANISH STOCKHOLDERS AND 39 PERCENT
OWNED BY MASSEY- FERGUSON LTD., OF TORONTO, CANADA). DISPUTE
AT MOTOR IBERICA' S PAMPLONA PLANT WAS LONG- STANDING ONE OVER
RETROACTIVE APPLICATION OF A RECENTLY INSTITUTED 14 TH
MONTH BONUS. IN APRIL LABOR COURT AT PAMPLONA RULED IN
FAVOR OF MOTOR IBERICA WORKERS RECEIVING 14 TH MONTH BONUS
RETROACTIVELY. COMPANY, HOWEVER, AT FIRST DRAGGED ITS
FEET, WHICH LED TO A SERIES OF SHORT STRIKES AT THE PLANT,
AND THEN HASTILY AGREED TO GRANT RETROACTIVE PAY TO ALL
ITS WORKERS IN ACCORDANCE LABOR COURT' S DECISION BUT
SIMULTANEOUSLY ANNOUNCED IT WAS DISMISSING SEVERAL WORKERS
LEADERS IN THE STRIKE. THIS MERELY AGGRAVATED SITUATION
AND THE DISPUTE DRAGGED ON FOR MORE THAN A MONTH WITH
STRIKES BY THE PLANT' S WORKERS AND REPRISALS OF SUSPENSIONS
WITHOUT PAY BY COMPANY, UNTIL COMPANY ATTEMPTED DISMISS
ENTIRE WORK FORCE.
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4. SITUATION TOOK A DRAMATIC TURN JUNE 13 WHEN 180 OF PLANT' S STRIKING WORKERS TOOK REFUGE IN A PAMPLONA CHURCH AND BEGAN A SIT- IN AIDED BY LOCAL CLERGY. THIS EVENT DRAMATIZING THEIR PLIGHT ACTED AS CATALYST TO HELP SPARK RAPIDLY SPREADING WILDCAT STRIKES WHICH ERUPTED NEXT DAY IN PAMPLONA AND CLOSED DOWN ITS MAJOR FACTORIES. ALTHOUGH STRIKE PARTIALLY RESPONDED TO CALLS BY CLANDESTINE GROUPS TO GRAPHICALLY DEMONSTRATE SOLIDARITY WITH MOTOR IBERICA' S WORKERS (WHOM THEY STRESSED HAD WON THEIR CASE BEFORE SPANISH LABOR AUTHORITIES ONLY TO WITNESS MOTOR IBERICA' S OPEN DEFIANCE OF LABOR COURT), IT WAS IN LARGE PART SPONTANEOUS.

5. JUNE 14-16 STRIKE ALSO SPREAD TO STREETS WITH NUMEROUS ATTEMPTS INTERRUPT TRAFFIC AND INFLICT MATERIAL DAMAGE ON BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS. THESE WERE MET WITH PROMPT AND EFFECTIVE ACTION BY AUTHORITIES, WHO NOT ONLY UTILIZED LOCAL POLICE BUT CALLED IN NUMBERS OF GUARDIA CIVIL FROM ELSEWHERE. OVER A DOZEN ARRESTS WERE MADE.

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6. BISHOP OF PAMPLONA ISSUED A STATEMENT ON SUNDAY REFERRING TO THESE EVENTS AND WHICH, WHILE CONDEMNING VIOLENCE, WAS CLEARLY FAVORABLE TO WORKERS DEMANDS AND DEFENDED AT LENGTH CHURCH' S HAVING SHELTERED 180 STRIKERS IN CHURCH SIT- IN (AFTER DAY AND A HALF WORKERS PEACEABLY LEFT CHURCH).

7. COMMENT: MOTOR IBERICA DISPUTE APPEARS HAVE PROVIDED CATALYST FOR PENT UP FRUSTRATION WORKERS IN PAMPLONA AREA. ACCORDING LABOR OPPOSITION SOURCES, MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE THIS

STRIKE IS THAT ON MERE ISSUE OF SOLIDARITY MAJORITY OF INDUSTRIAL WORK FORCE OF A MAJOR CITY WENT OUT ON RELATIVELY SPONTANEOUS NEAR- GENERAL STRIKE, A RARE OCCASION IN SPAIN SINCE CIVIL WAR. ONE SOURCE TOLD EMB LABATT THAT WHILE SOLIDARITY ASPECT WAS WORKER VICTORY, MOMENT WORKERS WENT OUT INTO STREETS THEY LOST BATTLE BECAUSE FORCES OF PUBLIC ORDER WOULD ALWAYS HAVE UPPER HAND IN STREETS (15 HEREAS ONLY TERRAIN WHICH WORKERS CAN SUCCESSFULLY TAKE ON SYSTEM IS INSIDE FACTORIES.)

8. PAMPLONAHAS BEEN SCENE IN RECENT YEARS NUMEROUS AND

FREQUENT SMALL STRIKES AND HAS THUS BEEN ONE OF MOST STRIKE AND VIOLENCE- PRONE INDUSTRIAL AREAS. THIS SITUATION WAS GREATLY AGGRAVATED BY JANUARY 1973 BASQUE ETA KIDNAPPING OF PAMPLONA INDUSTRIALIST FELIPE HUARTE IN MIDST OF LABOR DISPUTE AT ONE OF HIS PLANTS, AND CONSEQUENT RANSOM AND MEETING NUMEROUS LABOR DEMANDS BEFORE KIDNAPERS WOULD RELEASE HIM. IT NOT ONLY WORKERS IN NAVARRE WHO SUFFER FROM INDUSTRIAL MALAISE IN THAT ZONE, BUT EMPLOYERS AS WELL WHO, IN RECENT YEARS, HAVE BEEN IN VANGUARD OF EMPLOYEE GROUPS DEMANDING CHANGES IN REGIME'S LABOR POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONS.

9. ANOTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IS ATTITUDE OF CATHOLIC CHURCH WHICH, IN PAMPLONA AREA, CONTAINS SOME OF THE MOST ACTIVIST CLERGY AND PRELATES ON BEHALF OF LABOR AND SOCIAL CAUSES. IN RECENT MONTHS THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL CASES OF NAVARRE CLERGY WHOM THE GOVERNMENT HAS ATTEMPTED TO SANCTION, ARREST, AND OR DISCIPLINE BECAUSE OF OUTSPOKEN
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STATEMENTS READ FROM THEIR PULPITS, WHICH CLERGY HAVE BEEN STOUTLY DEFENDED BY NAVARRE BISHOPS.

10. IT ALSO NOTEWORTHY NAVARRE ONE OF FEW AREAS (BESIDES BASQUE PROVINCES) WHERE WORKERS COMMISSIONS NOT DOMINATED OR CONTROLLED BY SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY. NAVARRE IS IN FACT ONE AREA WHERE CATHOLIC CLANDESTINE GROUPS OF VARIOUS PERSUASIONS, ALTHOUGH PARTIALLY EXTREMIST ORIENTED, HAVE BEEN FOREFRONT OF LABOR AGITATION (FREQUENTLY WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE CATHOLIC CLERGY, AS IS APPARENTLY THE CASE IN THIS INSTANCE).

11. NAVARRE HAS ALSO BEEN ONE OF MAIN AREAS OF OPERATION OF BASQUE SEPARATIST ETA, AND OF SPANISH CARLISTS (WHO IN RECENT YEARS HAVE SHIFTED MARKEDLY FROM THEIR ONE- TIME PRO- REGIME STANCE TO A DECIDEDLY LEFTIST AND EVEN MARXIST POSTURE, PARTICULARLY IN THE LABOR FIELD).

12. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THIS PARTICULAR DISPUTE

AND NEAR- GENERAL STRIKE IT HAS FOMENTED WILL CONTINUE AT
SUBSTANTIAL LEVEL. NONETHELESS, NAVARRE AND ITS CAPITAL,
PAMPLONA, WILL CONTINUE AT THE CORE OF LABOR AND SOCIAL
UNREST. THIS STRIKE HAS ALSO GIVEN THE NEW GOVERNMENT
ITS FIRST TEST IN THE VITAL LABOR SECTOR. WHILE IT
IS TOO EARLY TO SEE IF THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL MODIFY
THE MACHINERY FOR HANDLING LABOR DISPUTES, THE PROMPT
REACTION OF THE CIVIL GUARD AND SECURITY FORCES TO NIP THE
GENERAL STRIKE IN THE BUD AND PREVENT DISORDERS MAY BE
TAKEN AS AN INDICATION OF THE HARD LINE MOST OBSERVERS
EXPECT THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ON " LAW AND ORDER".
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